

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF INFORMATION
VISTA IMAGING

What is Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA) Imaging?

The Department of Veterans Affairs has created a multi-media online patient record to integrate traditional medical chart information with medical images of all kinds including x-rays, pathology slides, cardiology motion views, wound photos, and pictures acquired during endoscopy, surgery, and eye exams. Document scanning allows the inclusion of handwritten records, diagrams, and outside medical reports in patients' online records. Images are acquired using clinical workstations or with automated standard interfaces to commercial devices.

Goals

The primary goal of the **VISTA** Imaging software is to enhance patient care by providing clinicians with a tool to aid communication and consultation among physicians - whether in the same department, in different services or at different facilities across the country. Consultation among peers is enhanced, as **VISTA** Imaging allows specialists from all medical disciplines to simultaneously view images acquired during diagnostic procedures.

Who is using VISTA Imaging and what qualitative benefits are achieved?

The **VISTA** Imaging System has been installed in all VA medical facilities, with multiple qualitative benefits, including:

- ◆ Improved continuity of care because clinicians have access to all images and records during the patient's visit, including images captured and residing at other VA locations
- ◆ Direct linkage between entities in the medical record (x-ray reports, procedure reports, pathology reports, narrative reports) and associated images
- ◆ Improved image interpretation through manipulation of digital images
- ◆ Remote image interpretation or consultation by specialty clinicians located at other VA medical centers provides increased veteran access to scarce resources.
- ◆ Scanned documents provide a more complete online patient record
- ◆ Automatic peer review is possible due to the availability of images to all treating clinicians.
- ◆ Imaging plays an important role in patient treatment and education. In many instances patients benefit from viewing their own images and participating in their own treatment decision-making.

Quantifiable benefits realized at VistA Imaging sites:

- ◆ Reduced patient waiting times and improved customer service
- ◆ Fewer repeat procedures due to elimination of lost film
- ◆ Reduced patient travel through telemedicine
- ◆ Reduced operational expenses
- ◆ Reduced bed-days of care (BDOC)
- ◆ Increased hospital productivity/improved efficiency of staff in routine activities
 - ◇ Care providers
 - ◇ Radiologists
 - ◇ Technologists
 - ◇ Film and patient records clerks
 - ◇ Quality control
 - ◇ More efficient teaching conferences and daily rounds
 - ◇ Sharing of clinician services by multiple facilities

With the advent of VistA Imaging, the VA now leads the nation in integrating diagnostic images into the electronic health record. VistA Imaging involves both technical innovations in hospital information systems and innovations in the way physicians handle and view their patients' data. With VistA Imaging Systems now installed in all VA medical centers, VHA will have the capability to make agency-wide decisions and adopt agency-wide approaches to re-engineering medical care. At the field level, clinicians using VistA Imaging have the ability to access images anytime anywhere, to analyze information through electronic image manipulation, to share images with the patient, and to use telemedicine to provide patient care remotely.